

PANEL ON SCIENCE TO EXPAND SCOPE

House Group Hopes to Keep Eye on All U.S. Programs

By JOHN W. FINNEY
Special to The New York Times.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 14—The House Committee on Science and Astronautics is now being rebuilt into the Congressional observation post on the American scientific scene.

The reorganization and redirection of the House's newest legislative committee may fill what has been regarded by many in Congress, the Executive branch and the scientific community as the most serious present gap in the Government's organization for directing an expanding scientific-technological effort.

Since the first Soviet satellite more than four years ago, the Executive branch has been reorganized so that the White House, for the first time can keep a comprehensive eye on the multitudinous scientific programs of the Government.

Within Congress, however, the scientific programs have tended to become compartmentalized among several committees. One result has been that in voting appropriations Congressmen have had no over-all perspective of the nation's scientific needs and directions.

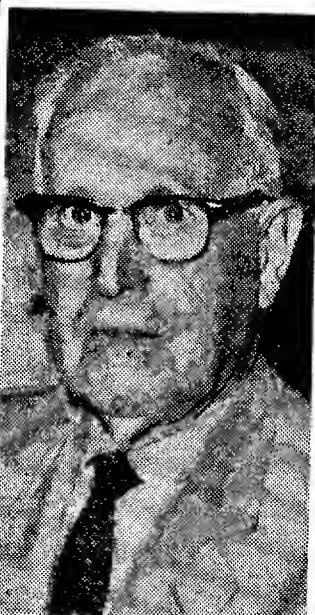
Science to Be Stressed

As he takes over the chairmanship of the three-year-old House Committee on Science and Astronautics, Representative George P. Miller believes that the "big challenge" facing it is to provide such a comprehensive survey of the scientific scene for Congress. The California Democrat became chairman of the committee with the death last September of Representative Overton Brooks, Democrat of Louisiana.

Until now the committee has tended to concentrate on the astronautics part of its title. Mr. Miller made clear in an interview that he will turn more and more to consideration of broader scientific problems and other areas of scientific research.

One proposal being favorably considered by Mr. Miller is for the committee to have periodic status-of-science hearings to find out where the nation is going in different fields of research and the needs of various scientific disciplines.

The proposal was contained in a reorganization plan drafted



Associated Press

REORGANIZES GROUP:
Representative George P. Miller, California Democrat, the chairman of the House Committee on Science and Astronautics.

for Mr. Miller by George J. Feldman, a New York lawyer who served as the staff director of the House Select Space Committee. This committee drafted the law creating the National Space and Aeronautics Administration and the House committee.

Plan Is Outlined

In suggesting that the committee broaden its interest and jurisdiction to include the entire field of science, the plan noted that "Congress, unlike the Executive branch, has heretofore had no real channel for obtaining a periodic over-all look at the state of American science." The report continued:

"The President has his Science Advisory Committee and the Federal Council for Science and Technology to help him in this respect. Congress has had no corresponding body, and the result has often been difficulty in coordinating legislative policy. Scientific information has naturally been diffused throughout Congress because of the varying committee jurisdictions."

"This seems to be a problem which the Committee on Science and Astronautics could do much to solve. It might begin by setting itself the task of staying closely abreast of the development of contemporary science—and toward this end the holding of 'status-of-science' hearings at least every two years might prove invaluable."

States stands in general science, in each of its major science disciplines and in the educational needs and demands relative to scientists and technicians and be in a position to advise Congress concerning the problems, needs, demands, ramifications and solutions to scientific matters."

In this manner, the plan points out, the committee could become the "legislative counterpart" to the Federal Council on Science and Technology. This White House committee was set up in the Eisenhower Administration to coordinate scientific policy and programs. The council is headed by the President's science adviser, Dr. Jerome B. Wiesner. It is composed of representatives from all agencies and departments conducting major research programs.

Advisers Would Testify

The committee, the plan said, could also "provide that closer relationship between Congress and Administration [scientific] policy-makers which the times appear to warrant." For example, the plan suggests that among the witnesses at the status-of-science hearings should be top Government scientific officials, such as the President's science adviser and the director of the National Science Foundation, as well as leading scientists in each of the major scientific disciplines.

Some members of the President's Science Advisory Committee believe that the Congressional committee's plan could have significant repercussions on scientific planning and management within the Executive branch.